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STATE FOR AF/W-PLUMB; ALSO FOR IO
LONDON FOR RBELL
PARIS FOR RKANEDA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2017
TAGS: PREL PGOV UN IV
SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: UN INVESTIGATION INTO ATTACK ON PM
SORO'S PLANE NOT A GIVEN

Classified By: DCM CYNTHIA AKUETTEH FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. A four-member UN team is visiting Cote
d,Ivoire in response to President Gbagbo,s request to the
Secretary General for an independent investigation into the

SIPDIS
June 29 attack on Prime Minister Soro,s plane in Bouake.
The team, headed by Terseli Loial, is spending a week in
country meeting with a full range of individuals. Contrary
to press reporting, the UN has not agreed to undertake an
investigation and there are several reasons why it may decide
not to do so. End Summary.

¶2. (C) DCM, accompanied by Defense Attache and
Political/Economic Section Chief, met October 2, at their
request, with a UN team visiting Cote d'Ivoire to clarify
President,s Gbabbo,s request for the UN Secretary General
to investigate the June 29 attack on the Prime Minister's
plane. The team said the UN can respond in different ways to
the government's request: the UN could set up an
international commission to conduct a judicial investigation;
the UN could establish a fact finding commission; or the UN
could merely provide support to the national invstigation
already underway. The team remarked tat they have advised
Ivorian officials that UN Scurity Council approval is needed
to conduct an nvestigation and that some Security Council
membe states have indicated they may not approve the
equest.

¶3. The team informed Ivorian officials hat any commission
established would have to opeate within Cote d,Ivoire,s
legal system and thatits conclusions would need to be
followed up accoding to local law, including prosecution of
persns identified as suspects. The team noted that an
investigation into the attack on the Prime Miniser's plane
is an internal political matter and lcks the international
aspect of other UN investigtions, such as the assassination
of Lebanese Prie Minister Rafik Hariri.

¶4. (C) Team members sid that Prime Minister Guillaume Soro
told them ctober 1 that having the UN conduct an
investigaion is important because its results will be viewed
as impartial while the objectivity of an investiation
conducted by the Ivorian Government will b questioned. The
team stated that Soro told the the attack has fostered a
lack of confidence inthe peace process among Ivorians and a
UN investiation could restore faith in the process as wellas address the culture of impunity that exists in the
country. According to the team, Soro said a genocide would
have occurred if he had been killed in the attack.

¶3. (C) The team told DCM that Minister of Justice Mamadou
Kone (who is a member of Prime Minister Soro's Forces
Nouvelles) informed them October 2 that only if creation of a
UN commission is impossible can other options be considered.
The team said Kone told them that the President has the legal
ability to waive any legal impediments that may exist for the
commission to carry out its investigation and that the
Justice Ministry will examine the Constitution to determine
if any provisions would hinder the work of an international
commission.

¶4. (C) Comment: An investigation into the attack on the Prime
Minister's plane is a double-edged sword. If a perpetrator(s)
not affiliated with President Gbagbo,s is identified, this
could dissipate the mistrust that exists between Soro's camp
and that of the President. However, if an investigation
points to someone in the Gbagbo camp, any remaining trust
between Soro and Gbagbo would likely evaporate and the
Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) would face the same fate

as other unfulfilled peace accords.   End Comment.
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